Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

Issue 600

jagannātha-darśanaṁ rathayātrāyām

Darshan of Jagannath at Ratha-yatra

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तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

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Darshan of Jagannath At Ratha-yatra

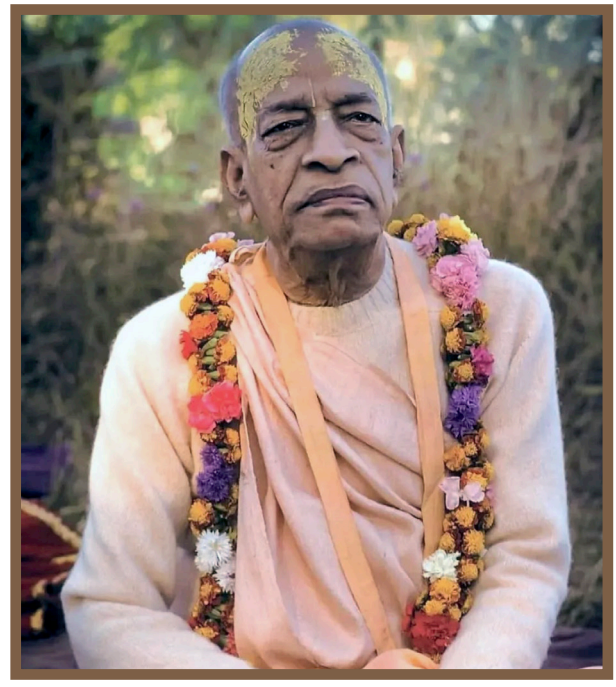
His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Devotee: Srila Prabhupada, can you explain a little more about *Ratha-yātrā*. Anyone who takes part in *Ratha-yātrā*, are they liberated?

Prabhupada: Certainly.

Devotee: Does that mean they won't take birth again?

Prabhupada: Yes, provided they take it seriously. Otherwise, if they keep their mentality differently, then according to their mind they have to get a body. But just like so many boys, they come here in the beginning out of curiosity, but gradually, they get the chance of becoming devotees. Similarly, if they take the chance, then they will be liberated. They come out of curiosity, but if they take it seriously, then they will be liberated. Just like the hospital is meant for curing disease. So one should take the treatment. If one simply goes and visits the hospital thinking "Now I am cured," how will it be done? Suppose if I advertise that, "Anyone who simply visits this hospital will be cured of disease." If someone thinks, "I have come here and now I am going", then how will they be cured? If one sees Jagannath at the *Ratha-yātrā*, their way for liberation is open, but if they come back again and entangle themselves, then? One goes to the doctor. He gives an injection and the disease is cured. But if he again comes back and does the same thing so that he develops



Unkown photographer.

Cover: Vintage photo of Jagannath on his cart in Puri during *Ratha-yātrā*. Unknown photographer.

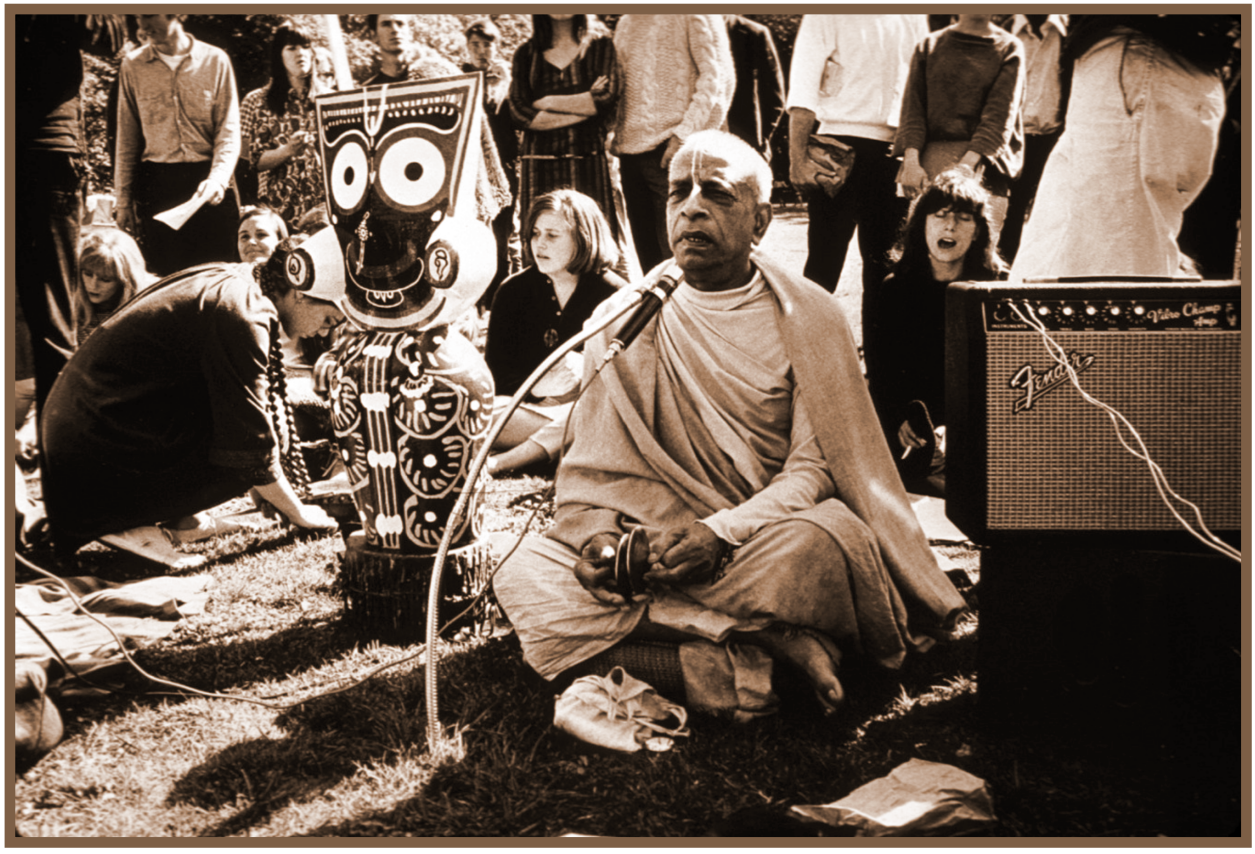


Photo by Mukunda Goswami

Srila Prabhupada with Jagannath in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco

this disease again, then whose fault is it? This is called *hasti-snāna*. The elephant takes bath very nicely, but then as soon as it comes on the bank of the river or the lake, he takes dust and throws it all over his body again. If we do that, then we shall always remain dirty.

It is a fact that by seeing Jagannath one becomes *mukta*, liberated. But if he again comes to *māyā*, then who can check him? Just like you are all on the path of liberation, but if you again come back to *māyā*, then where is your liberation? If someone comes here and sees that their path for liberation is open, then they should protect themselves. Just like a disease, the fever is subsided. Now one should be careful not to relapse the fever. ... Not that, "Now I have seen Jagannath. My liberation is guaranteed. Now I can do anything I want." This mentality will not give you liberation. You have seen Jagannath and your sinful activities are now neutralized, now don't commit them again! Now make progress! Then your liberation is guaranteed. *nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa buddhiḥ* — At every initiation ceremony we teach, that even once chanting Hare Krishna is sufficient to make us pure from all sinful activities. But if we commit sin again in the hope that, "Because I am chanting, this will be neutralized," that is the greatest sin. So on one side, you should always chant Hare Krishna mantra so that you may not fall down; and on another side, you should be careful: "Now no illicit sex life, no intoxication, no meat-eating." In this way, if you carefully make progress, then your liberation is guaranteed.

— From a lecture in Los Angeles. 1 July 1971.

Activities of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in Jagannath Puri Part 2

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

When I stayed in Puri I made a lot of advancement in devotional service. I became more detached in my worldly life and there was no longer any misunderstanding that worldly progress might produce anything of lasting value. Generally, I would go to the temple every day for *darśana, nāma-kīrtana, śravaṇa*, and *sādhu-saṅga* in the evening. Any day that I did not eat Jagannath's *urad dahl* I would not feel satisfied.

Unknown photographer.

Lord Jagannath on his chariot at Puri Ratha-yātrā

As soon as I entered the temple, someone would give me dahl.

On one side in the temple was the Mukti Mandap where the Brahmins would sit and teach. All of them were *Māyāvādīs*. When I went near them my mind felt disturbed, therefore, I would sit near the Goddess Lakshmi's Mandir or by Mahaprabhu's *pāda-padma*. When we sat there many pandits from the Muktimandap would come and sit with us. I named this place *Bhakti-prajñāna*. Our learned meetings at this place gradually developed nicely.

Just as the Jagannatha Temple is very lofty and beautiful, so also the *sevā* was wonderful. To see that pastime of service charms one's mind. Five to seven hundred people are daily present to behold the routine festivals such as the evening *āratika*. What bliss! Many kinds of participants come from all over India to attend the religious festivals. Seeing this the eyes are soothed. O Lalu, only when you see all these pastimes with a pure heart can the servants be understood!

There were many *yātrās* [celebrated there], such as *Dola-yātrā, Ratha-yātrā,* etc. I had the responsibility of watching over these festivals. Taking many constables and several *karmacārīs* [fruitive materialists] with me, I made so much effort to oversee the pilgrims that I cannot write of it. I would make favorable arrangements for the pilgrims to see the deity and to take *prasāda*, and to hear complaints from the people. The king and suchlike, and the *karmacārīs* of the temple used to commit many illegal acts. I would go there to

Unkown artist. Contemporary painting from Living Traditions of Art.

Jagannath Ratha-yātrā *in Puri*

prevent all such things and thus I made enemies of the king and the king's men. Because I was helped by Lord Jagannath, no one was able to harm me in any way. I served Lord Jagannath at my ease for almost five years.

While in Sri Purushottama Kshetra I changed my residence several times. Finally, by the grace of Ramachandra Atya, I got a house [of my own?]. On the night of the 16th of Magh 1278 [1872 A.D.] Kamala Prasada was born in the residence of Kali Chaudhuri by the pond, Sraddhavali. And then, on the 25 of Magh 1280 [1874 A.D.], Bimala Prasada took birth in the house of Ramachandra Atya. All of the auspicious ceremonies such as *anna-prāśana* [first eating of grains] were performed with Jagannatha *prasāda*. We gave up all *karma-kāṇḍa* activities and depended solely on *prasāda*.

As soon as I arrived in Puri, I got all the registration work and because of that I received a minor [promotion]. In 1870 I was promoted to the 5th grade, for which I received a salary of 300 Rupees per month. And in that year, I got the full powers of a Magistrate. I spent the time in Puri in great happiness, observing the festivals, and acquiring knowledge and devotion. Sri Purushottam Kshetra is directly Vaikuntha, what doubt is there? I did not like to leave this place, but then Sadu was getting older and I had to return to Bengal in order to arrange her marriage. 🍊

— *Śrī Svalikhita Jīvanī*. Translated by Shukavak Das. Edited by Karnamrita Das. Unpublished manuscript.

Unknown photographer. Circa 1950s.

A rare photo of Jagannath on his *cart in Puri*

Unknown photographer

Crowds in Puri at Rath-yātrā

Unknown photographer

Crowds in Puri at Ratha-yātrā

Liberation is not the Devotee's Motive

From the Life and Teachings of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

As Mahaprabhu had done, Srila Saraswati Thakur would lead his followers in cleaning the *Guṇḍicā* temple. On the day of *Guṇḍicā-mārjana* in 1934, Srila Saraswati Thakur cited from *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, *rathe ca vāmanaṁ dṛṣṭvā punar janma na vidyate* — "One who sees the Lord on his chariot is not reborn," and then explained that the desire for *mokṣa* was not the *Gaudīyas'* motive in attending *Ratha-yātrā*; their connection with Lord Jagannath is solely through selfless service, and their intention is to take him to *Guṇḍicā*, which is synonymous with their hearts, and keep him there to serve him in the best possible manner. And one year at *Balagaṇḍi*, where Jagannath halts before proceeding to *Guṇḍicā*, Srila Saraswati Thakur told his assembled followers that only devotees are qualified to pull the rope of Jagannath's chariot; non-devotees who desire liberation by thus participating should not pull it. [**Author's note:** Lord Jagannath's *Ratha-yātrā* has always been open to everyone without restriction. Srila Saraswati Thakur was simply stressing the principle that *bhakti* should be performed without personal desire.]

— Bhakti Vikasa Swami. Śrī *Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*. Page 393. Bhakti Vikasa Trust. Surat, India. 2009.

Seeing Jagannath on the Cart

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Devotee: You were saying that if one simply sees Lord Jagannath on the *ratha* cart he will get *mukti,* liberation. This means every single person who sees Jagannath will get *mukti*?

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Jagannath the Lord, not Jagannath an idol or wooden *mūrti*!

Devotee: So that means someone who has *prema*?

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Yes! Yes!

Devotee: It is a very popular idea for devotees to say, "Oh, if you simply go to see Lord Jagannath you will get liberation."

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Alright, that is very good. Anyhow, come and see Lord Jagannath. Anyhow, take part. Yes. That is encouragement. You just chant and dance before the *ratha*. Very nice.

— From a class in Bhubaneswar on 11 July 1994.

Vintage Odishan painting by an unknown artist.

Devotees dance at Ratha-yātrā

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Mahaprabhu Dances Before Jagannath

The Medieval Gaudiya Poet, Yadunath Das

(Śrī-rāga)

āpane nācite yabe prabhura mana haila
sāta sampradāya laye ekatra karila

1. Gaura's heart decides to dance. The devotees gather around him.

uddaṇḍa nṛtye prabhu chāḍiyā huṅkāra
cakranemi bhrame yena ālāta ākāra

2. Intensely dancing, the Lord made a loud roaring sound. He was spinning like the rim of a wheel — resembling a circling firebrand.

nṛtye yāṁhā yāṁhā prabhura paḍe pada-tala
sa-sāgara śaila mahī kare ṭalamala

3. Whenever the Lord's dancing feet touch the ground, the earth and all the oceans and mountains tremble.

stambha-sveda pulakāśru sveda vaivarṇya
nānā bhāve vivaśa garba harṣa dainya

4. He becomes stunned. His body shakes. His hairs stand erect. He weeps. He perspires. His complexion turns pale. He manifests all the symptoms of ecstasy. He is alternately proud, joyful, and humble.

dekhiyā prabhura nṛtya jagannātha hāse
se ānande bhāsi yāya yadunātha dāse

5. Seeing Lord Gaura's ecstatic dancing, Lord Jagannath smiles. Now Yadunath Das floats in an ocean of bliss.

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